

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1.

A promotion issuing system, comprising:

a first computer connected to a network, the first computer having a memory;

at least one additional computer connected to the network, the at least one additional
computer having a memory; and

a first process that resides in the memory of the first computer with instructions to:

- (a) distribute a promotion on the network;
- (b) identify the downloading of the promotion by the at least one additional computer;
- (c) allow the at least one additional computer to download the promotion; and
- (d) terminate any further attempts by the at least one additional computer to download the promotion any additional times.

2. The system of claim 1 further comprising an additional process residing in the memory of the at least one additional computer.

3. The system of claim 2 wherein the additional process has instructions to record a unique identifier associated with the promotion about the promotion, and communicate with the first process in the determination to allow the download if the unique identifier has been recorded and to terminate the download if the unique identifier has been recorded any additional times.

4. The system of claim 2, wherein the additional process has instructions to:

identify the at least one additional computer each time the at least one additional computer attempts to download the promotion,

allow the at least one additional computer to download the promotion if it has been identified once, and

5

terminate any additional downloads if the at least one additional computer has been identified more than once.

21 5. The system of claim 1 further comprising a data structure stored in the memory of the first computer, and a copy of the data structure stored in the at least one additional computer.

6. The system of claim 5 wherein the first computer is adapted to allow the at least one additional computer to download the promotion and record the copy of the data structure, and terminate any further download attempts made by the at least one additional computer if the data structure is recorded in the memory of the first computer any additional times.

7. The system of claim 1 wherein further comprising a device coupled to the first computer and the at least one additional computer, the device being adapted to disallow more than one download of the promotion by the at least one additional computer.

8. A method of managing on-line promotions, comprising:

using a first computer to distribute a plurality of promotions on a network, wherein

the promotions are adapted to be downloaded by a plurality of computers,

tracking each of the plurality of promotions that are downloaded on one or more of

the plurality of computers, and

identifying and terminating attempts to download any one of the plurality of

promotions more than once on any one of the plurality of computers.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the plurality of promotions are available to one or more of a plurality of network locations.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the network locations are web sites.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein each of the plurality of promotions are tracked by a process that resides on one or more of the plurality of computers.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising storing a unique identifier associated to each of the plurality of promotions on the first computer, and additionally storing the unique identifier in the process.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein identifying and terminating attempts to download the promotion more than once, further comprises allowing any one of the plurality of computers to download any one of the plurality of promotions if the process matches its identifier with the identifier in the first computer, and disallowing any one of the computers to download any one of the promotions if the process matches its identifier with the identifier in the first computer any additional times.

14. The method of claim 11 further comprises using the process to identify components of each of the plurality of the computers, and storing data corresponding to the components in the process and on the first computer.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein identifying and terminating attempts to download the promotion more than once, further comprises allowing any one of the plurality of computers to download any one of the plurality of promotions if the data corresponding to the components matches with the data corresponding to the components on the first computer, and disallowing any one of the computers to download any one of the promotions if the data corresponding to the components matches with the data corresponding to the components on the first computer any additional times.

16. The method of claim 9 wherein each of the plurality of promotions is tracked by a file that resides on one or more of the plurality of computers.

17. The method of claim 9 wherein each of the plurality of promotions is tracked by a device coupled to the first computer and to each of the plurality of computers.

18. The method of claim 9 further comprising limiting the duration that the promotion can be validly downloaded by one or more of the plurality of computers.

19. The method of claim 9 further comprising associating a second unique identifier with each of the plurality of promotions, determining if there exists a copy of any one of the plurality of promotions and disallowing the copy to be redeemed.

20. A method of preventing abusive use of an on-line promotion, comprising:

providing the promotion with a unique identifier,

distributing security software to a computer that is attempting to download the promotion,

using the security software to record the identifier,

denying a download if the security software has recorded the identifier moer than once,

optionally printing the promotion if the download has not been denied, and

checking the printed promotion for copying.